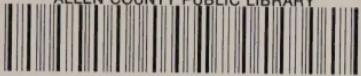


Mi L

Gc
974.902
T24s
1889776

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 02256 0160

170 to 2000
Copied

F-2

THE STORY
OF
TENAFLY

THIS FIRST EDITION OF
THE STORY OF TENAFLY
IS LIMITED TO 2000 COPIES



Copyright March, 1939
The Tenafly Trust Company

The Story
OF
TENAFLY, N.J.

by

Eva Browning Sisson



PUBLISHED BY THE TENAFLY TRUST COMPANY

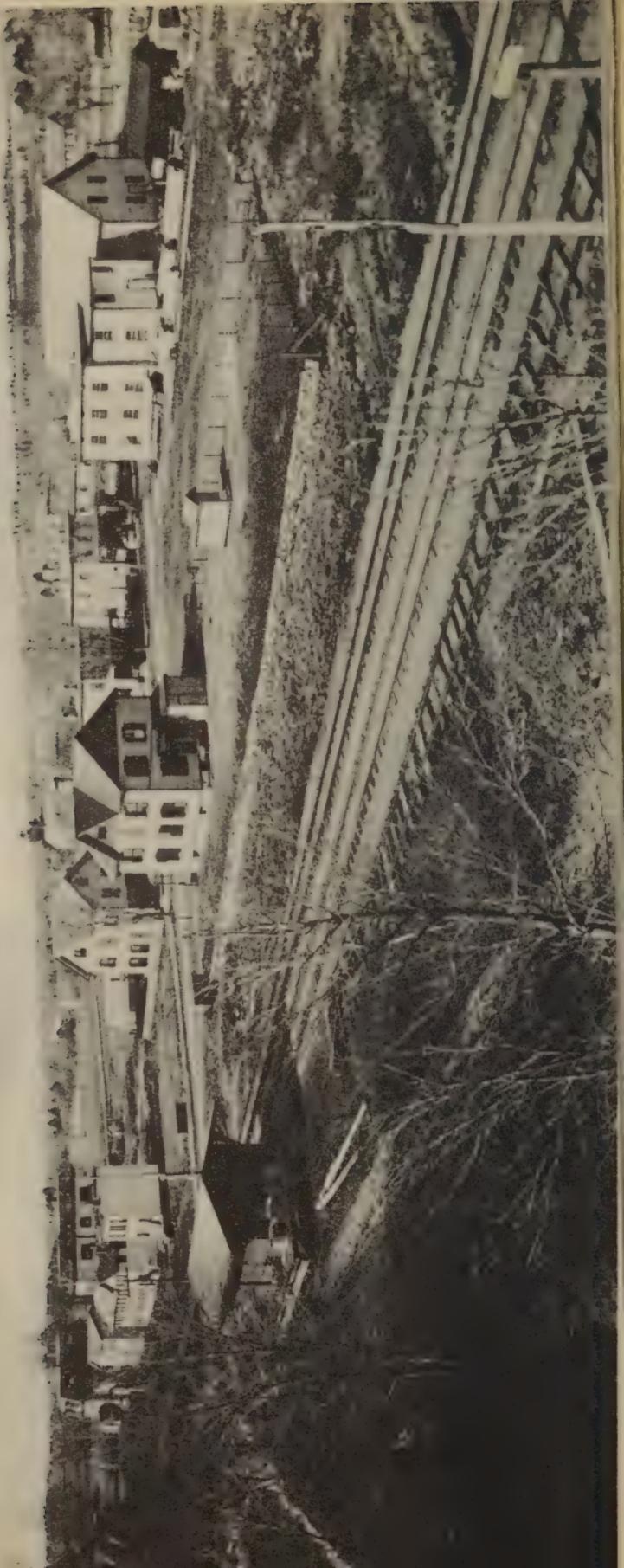
In the belief that our residents would like to know something of the history and background of the community in which they reside, we commissioned Miss Eva Browning Sisson to write a story of this Borough. She has spent months in painstaking research about Tenafly and gives you herewith the results—which we are confident you will enjoy reading.

One cannot peruse this chronicle, without being conscious that Tenafly has been blessed in the past and we trust will continue to be in the future, with folks who were willing to give of themselves for the welfare of their community and the good of their fellow-citizens.

It is our hope that this little book will always be a reminder to us that we live in a community with a rich heritage. Let us all strive to maintain the splendid reputation it now enjoys.

THE TENAFLY TRUST COMPANY

1889776





When the early Dutch settlers began to expand beyond the limits of Manhattan Island, it was to be expected that they would establish themselves within easy reach of the trading post, then called New Amsterdam. The western shore of the great Hudson River attracted many of these pioneers as early as 1640. Here were fertile valleys and gently rolling hills, as well as a natural fortification of sheer palisades, which would protect them from invaders on the east.

For the most part, the Indians in that region were friendly so long as their new white brothers paid for the land with bits of silver and shining pieces of glass. The territory immediately west of the Hudson (which is now designated as Northern New Jersey) was occupied by a tribe of Algonquins known as the Achkinheschacky (Hackensack) Indians, who had

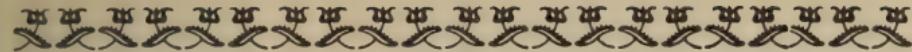


many settlements along the river now bearing that name. They were an industrious and peace-loving tribe. These Indians apparently inhabited the region east to the Hudson as well, because records show that the Dutch used to collect tribute from them by merely sending a sloop up that river. Another tribe of this vicinity, also Algonquins, was the Tappans, who had several villages extending north of the Hackensack River to the "Highlands" near Nyack.

They taught the settlers many helpful things about fishing, hunting, and the cultivation of maize (corn). Indeed it was the Indians who showed them how to burn off the grass each year from the Hackensack meadows. Important, too, was the use of the grease of eagles and raccoons' fat which seemed a partially effective antidote to "muskettos." As for their craftsmanship it has been claimed that the stone axes, bone needles, clay and shell pottery, and soap-stone pots fashioned by the Indians of New Jersey showed a skill superior to that of the Indians of other tribes.

The site of a famous Indian village was on the Overpeck (Tantaqua) Creek, just north of the present Fort Lee Road. Another was at Communipaw (a region near Jersey City which still uses the old Indian name) where trading with the Dutch was actively carried on.

Wampum, besides being used for decorative purposes, and woven into belts and mats as a

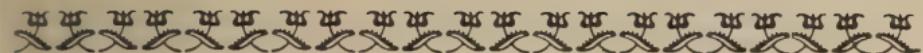


means for keeping their records, was a medium of monetary exchange. Certainly one of the earliest "mints" in this country was a wampum factory, located near the Pascack River about a hundred yards south of the present boundary line of New York and New Jersey. The ruins of the old factory remain today. Here wampum was made from the center of periwinkle or clam shells. In 1641 bad wampum was circulated, and the "counterfeitors" were believed to be Dutch. The traders, thereafter, tried to regulate and stabilize the currency.

Much credit for the peaceful relationship between the Indians and the white man in this section should go to the great Chief Oratam of the Hackensacks (1577-1667), a wise leader and a true diplomat. It was frequently Oratam who made the first overtures for peace when there was trouble between the Indians and the settlers but, sad to relate, it was often a white man who began the controversies.

In 1643 a serious incident occurred in Communipaw. A Dutchman plied an Indian trader with liquor, then questioned his skill with a bow and arrow. Unhappily the Indian's hand was still steady, for picking up his weapon he aimed at a Dutchman who was thatching his roof some distance away and killed him outright. The terrified Indian then fled. The Dutch demanded the surrender of the murderer, but the Indians refused. War seemed imminent, the Dutch nursed their grievance, and there followed many troublesome years in which they sought revenge. In February of the same

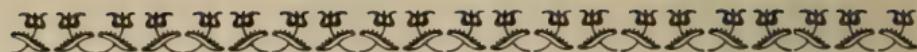




year, the Dutch effected a wholesale slaughter of two Weckquaesgeeks settlements not far from Communipaw. Even the friendly Hackensacks and Tappans made common cause with the Weckquaesgeeks who had suffered in the February massacre. The work of vengeance against the Dutch was directed at the little section known as Vriesendael and was executed by the firebrand, the tomahawk, and the scalping knife. (Vriesendael was located between the regions of the present Sparkill and Tappan. It was named for the landowner De Vries who had established a Dutch colony there. This gentleman had always been a champion of the Indian cause, and consequently the only family spared in the whole settlement was that of the kindly De Vries.)

The next six years saw occasional skirmishes, and it was a period of anxiety for all the Dutch in this vicinity. Finally, in 1669 a group of chieftains (including Oratam) made a proposition for lasting peace at Fort Amsterdam on Manhattan Island. Each chief threw beaver skins to the ground and declared "in the name of all, that they desired to live in friendship with the whites, and wished either side to forget what was past." Director General Magapolensis of New Netherlands accepted the pledge and distributed small gifts of tobacco and ammunition, so the Indians departed, well pleased.

The peace lasted until 1655, when trouble began again—this time because of the Indians.



With no warning, a group of Mohawks paddled down the Hudson in sixty canoes and attacked some Dutchmen in New Amsterdam, carrying away several prisoners. They returned them only after a dangerously large ransom of ammunition was paid. Knowing that Indians with firearms were unusually formidable, the Dutch Governor ordered blockades built throughout New Jersey and Manhattan—as far west as the Hackensack River.

Hostilities began anew, and the whites once more seized land without payment. But Oratam, the peacemaker, managed to keep his Indians in hand, and there was little difficulty west of the Hudson. Realizing that the sale of “spirits” was the source of much trouble, Oratam asked and received permission to seize not only liquor but liquor salesmen as well; thus he became, in fact, the first prohibition agent in this country.

When the English took possession of the Dutch colonies in 1664, Sir George Cartaret and John Berkley, who leased what is now the state of New Jersey from the Duke of York, profited by the unfortunate mistakes of the Dutch. These Englishmen took great pains to renew the treaties with the Indian chieftains, and also insisted that all lands which formerly belonged to the Indians should be paid for in some token by the individual colonists. More effective still were the new territorial lines which purposely divided the Indian tribes. With their unity and power disintegrated,

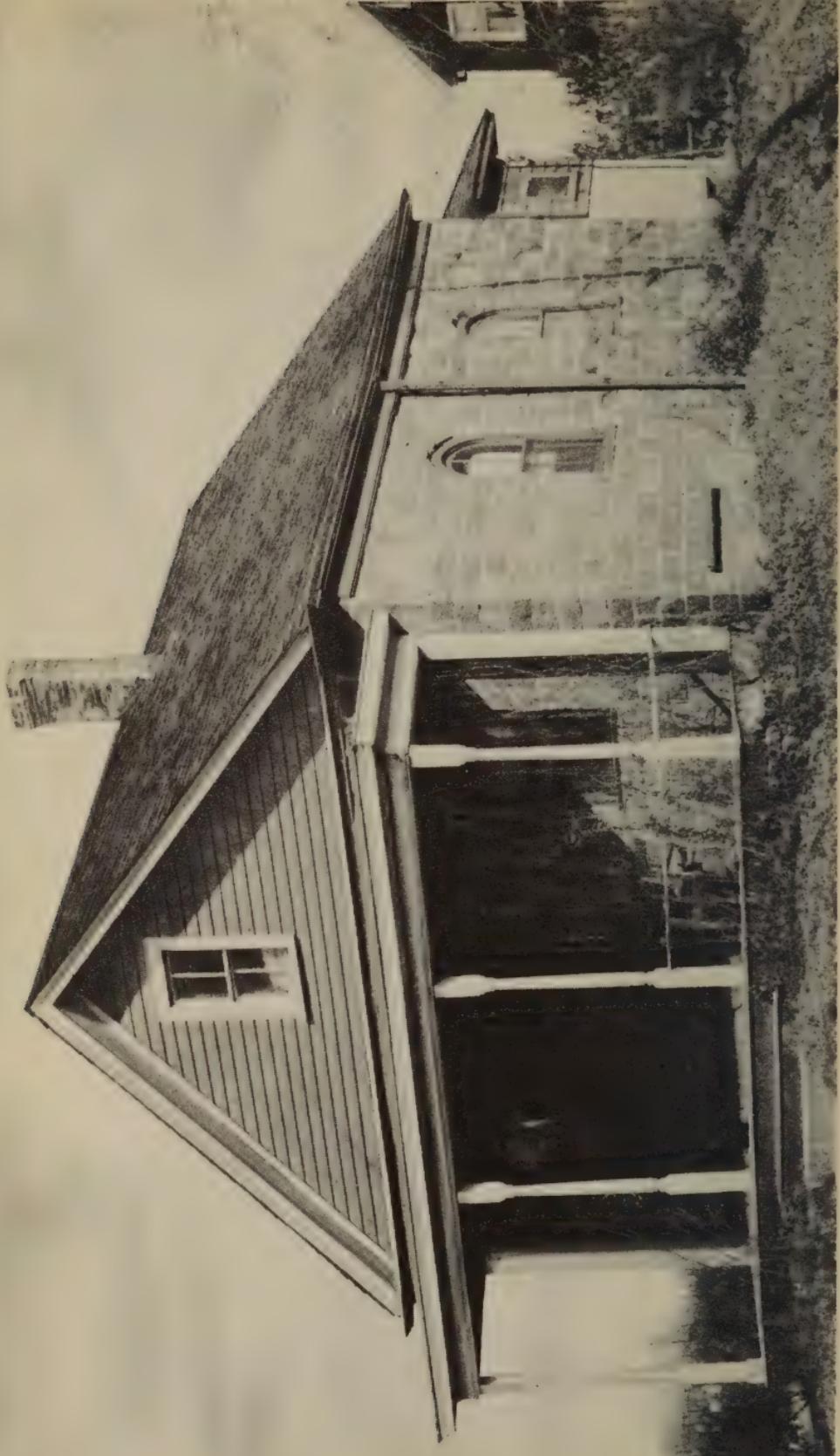


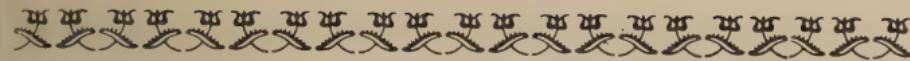
they eventually withdrew peaceably to the north and west where the whites had not yet settled.

By this time there were little colonial settlements along the Palisades, extending inward for several miles. After the British annexation many colonists left their country to settle here, and twenty years later there was an influx of French Huguenots who left their native land to avoid persecution. Despite the three distinct nationalities the Dutch influence prevailed. Proof of this are the old homes known as Dutch Colonial which dot the valley of Northern New Jersey. This has become a recognized style of architecture and many modern homes are built along these lines. The main part of these early buildings was fashioned of irregular stone, pointed with white mortar, and had graceful sloping roofs and divided doors. The Old Homestead of the Westervelt family on Tenafly Road and Westervelt Avenue is a perfect example of this style of architecture, and is one of the oldest homes in Tenafly.

In 1693, the County of Bergen, New Jersey, was divided into two townships, Bergen and Hackensack. A part of the latter section between the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers was designated by the Dutch as "Tene Vlay" or "Willow Meadow" (also interpreted as "Little Valley"). Eventually the name was contracted to "Tenafly" and it is with that area that this history is chiefly concerned.

According to some records, a large strip of land was granted to Colonel Jacobus Van Cort-

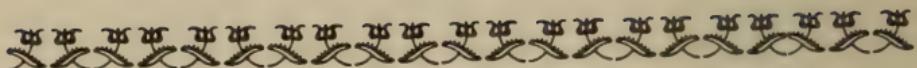




land in 1688. At his death the property was divided among his three daughters, and the share of one, a Mrs. De Peyster, comprised most of the area which is now Tenafly. Records show that many years later William Jay, brother of John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, inherited about 1,500 acres, or about two-thirds of the present borough. But certain it is that the Dutch families of Westervelt and Huyler, and the Huguenot DeMotts, Loziers, and Demarests resided in this vicinity long before 1700.

The settlers up and down the Northern Valley devoted themselves to farming. At first crops were large enough only to supply the family needs, but each year larger tracts of land were being cultivated and the surplus crops found a ready market in New Amsterdam, a growing and thriving community across the Hudson River.

The story of Tenafly may be said to have originated when trading with New Amsterdam (later New York) was begun. Boat landings were built from Nyack to Bergen, but none was more important or more seething with activity than Huyler's Landing—located more than a mile south of the present Yonkers Ferry Landing at Alpine. After the Revolution this became the shipping point for the entire Northern Valley. Here also vessels were built and repaired. As many as three new ships a year are recorded to have been launched.



While Tenafly can lay no claim to a "Washington's Headquarters" nor can it display an authentic cannonball wedged in a wall, certain events of military significance did take place in well-known points of this vicinity.

It is of local interest that at some time during the war the British took especial vengeance on John Huyler, a captain in our militia and a member of the Huyler family who operated the Landing, by burning his home.

On November 6, 1776, General Washington gathered his forces at North Castle, east of the Hudson River, to hold council with his generals about the defense of New Jersey. It was obvious that Fort Washington, in New York, and Fort Lee, directly opposite in New Jersey, both important strongholds because of their prominent positions on the Hudson River, would soon be attacked by the British, who were at that moment rallying their forces east of the Hudson. Should the British obtain control of these points, Philadelphia, second city in importance to New York, would be the next point of attack, and the direct land route from New York to Philadelphia was through New Jersey.

Therefore Washington laid his plans to halt the inevitable march through that state. British ships had invaded the Hudson as far north as Stony Point, despite efforts to impede them by sinking vessels



and hazards in the river. Washington divided his forces into three groups: Lord Stirling with one was to cross at King's Ferry (Stony Point) and proceed to Hackensack through Rockland and the back country, General Heath was to remain at the Highlands, east of the Hudson, to protect that region, and General Charles Lee was to station his troops at North Castle to await orders—but he was to be ready for immediate departure should Washington need assistance in New Jersey. Washington himself planned to look over the situation at Fort Lee, and thence repair to Hackensack.

Meanwhile, Washington communicated with General Greene at Fort Lee concerning the possibility of evacuating Fort Washington and concentrating the forces at Fort Lee. The latter opposed this move, so the troops were not recalled.

Several days later, following the road at the top of the Palisades, Washington arrived at Fort Lee and found it hopelessly inadequate in the event of attack. It consisted mainly of a series of stone huts, large enough for two men and with none too solid outside walls. Because of its location on a prominent bluff, an attack from the river could be resisted, but without sufficient time for stronger fortifications a defense of the fort against land forces would be futile.

The condition of the fort is best described by Thomas Paine who wrote: "As I was with the troops at Fort Lee and marched with them to the

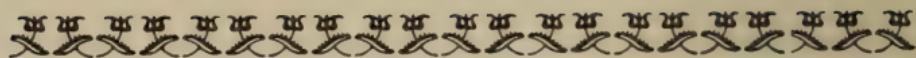




edge of Pennsylvania, I am well acquainted with many circumstances which those living at a distance knew nothing of. Our situation there was exceedingly cramped, the place being on a narrow neck of land between the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers. Our force was inconsiderable, being not one-fourth as great as General Howe could bring against us. We had no army at hand to relieve the garrison, had we shut ourselves up and stood on the defense."

Since this was the condition, abandoning the fort was imperative. On November 16, 1776, while Washington was arranging for the removal of troops and stores from Fort Lee, Fort Washington, on the opposite shore, was attacked by General Howe. Washington stood on a rocky promontory near Fort Lee and viewed the tragedy with a spy glass. He called for a messenger to deliver word to the besieged that help would be sent if possible. A young captain volunteered, and after scrambling down the cliff under cover of darkness he managed to cross the river in a canoe, despite two British frigates which guarded the river. He reached the opposite shore just in time to see the white flag of truce hoisted over Fort Washington, and before his return the Union Jack had been run up.

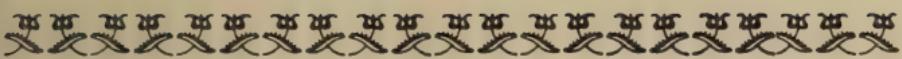
Plans for the evacuation were hastened and arrangements made for the removal of precious supplies. Washington repaired to headquarters at the home of Peter Zabriskie in Hackensack.



Two days later, Rebel scouts reported that Cornwallis had crossed the Hudson to Closter Dock, a point not sufficiently defended or watched. Cornwallis with 6,000 men had but one objective—the seizure of Fort Lee. The fastest way to reach that point was by way of a road which led along the crest of the Palisades. Since the road was narrow, his troops had to cut away brush and throw down planks so that the heavy cannon could be safely transported. Traces of this famous “military road” can still be seen along the Palisades.

Meantime, General Greene in command at Fort Lee sped the word to Washington and sent out troops to retard the progress of Cornwallis. Washington arrived at the fort three-quarters of an hour after he had received the message. The fort was hastily evacuated, the men sent out to meet Cornwallis were recalled, and General Washington marched at the head of his troops as they attempted to cross the Hackensack River before the British could attack the rear garrison. In their flight, large quantities of supplies had to be abandoned.

At that time there was only one usable bridge over the Hackensack River. It had been built a few years before the war to replace the old one. It is interesting to note that for many years these two localities bore the names of “Old Bridge” and “New Bridge.” At the present time, however, “Old Bridge” is known as “Riveredge” but the name “New Bridge” still applies.



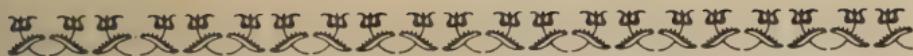
It was important that our troops should secure New Bridge, which lay about six miles from them and three miles from the enemy—as the crow flies. The situation was indeed critical—and had Cornwallis suspected that Fort Lee was being abandoned, he could have cut off the retreat and demolished the little band of soldiers. But unaware of the Rebel move, he proceeded directly to the fort, took about a hundred prisoners and some provisions, then followed Washington's troops to the river. Fortunately the delay had been sufficient to allow the Rebels to cross the Hackensack safely, a few by ferry (at Little Ferry) and the rest over the bridge which they immediately destroyed, thus hindering the progress of the British. One account states, "It was a most precipitous flight, and when the Republicans (Rebels) had crossed to the west side of the Hackensack, the Royalists (British) were at the eastern end."

The following day General Washington, great strategist of retreats, safely crossed the Passaic River at Aquakanonck (now Passaic), burned that bridge, and further continued his retreat towards New Brunswick and the Delaware.

Washington's men, numbering 3,000 at most, were too poorly equipped and too far outnumbered to face the fresh recruits of the British near Hackensack. Moreover, he did not wish to risk a skirmish in the open country in that vicinity unless his forces were substantially aided.



HIGHWOOD HOTEL

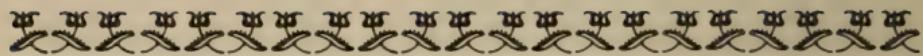


Here it might be well to state the treachery of General Lee. As has been previously mentioned, he was to await further orders at North Castle. Washington had sent instructions for him to move quickly to Hackensack, but General Lee intentionally delayed. Being only second in command, he was jealous of General Washington, and doubtless hoped that by the defeat of Washington's army the Commander-in-Chief would be discredited with Congress and he would then take Washington's place.

In his report to Congress, Washington stated: "As nothing but necessity obliged me to retire before the enemy and leave so much of Jersey unprotected, I conceive it my duty to make head against them so soon as it shall be at least possible of doing it with propriety." He also said that if the troops (referring to those of General Lee) "confidentially expected" had arrived, he could have made a stand against the enemy at Hackensack or Brunswick.

Thus this vicinity can be considered important—not so much for what happened as for what did not happen here during the American Revolution. Clearly if Cornwallis had cut directly through this section and met the enemy east of the Hackensack River, the course of the Revolution, yes, even the destiny of this country might have been affected.

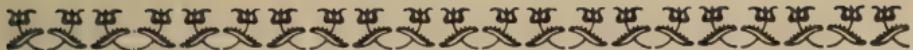
After the hectic years of war and reconstruction, life went on peacefully, the people were



united in the cause of liberty (those unfortunate Tories who were loyal to the King were banished to Canada), community life definitely began to develop, and a period of prosperity was opened. The frugal farmer, who had previously relied on the assistance of his family for sowing and reaping, employed the services of hired men, and the busy housewife added a maid-servant to her staff. New York was now a bustling metropolis; crops brought gold and gold brought frills and furbelows hitherto unpossessed by the hard-working farmer. But farming remained the only industry and Huyler's Landing, the trading point.

In the late 1820's real estate men in New York conceived the idea of disposing of the old Jay farm by means of a lottery. This long narrow strip of land containing 604 acres extended from west of County Road to the Hudson River. The north and south boundaries paralleled what is now Hudson Avenue in Tenafly. The land was divided into three farms, one of 100 acres and two of 36 acres—the remainder into "parcels" of from one to six acres.

The lottery was conducted in New York City, but the highest bidders apparently took their investments lightly. Some down payments were made but never followed through and the only result of the first attempt of a real estate boom in Tenafly was a dismal failure. It took many years to clear the titles for all the land involved. In the meantime, Mary O'Kill, favorite of James Jay, was deeded most of the property.



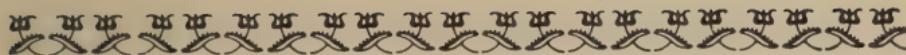
At the middle of the 19th century there were still only two ways for residents of this locality to go to New York—one to take the stage coach to Hoboken and ferry across (all of which cost 50 cents) and the other to go the whole way—from Huyler's Landing—by boat. The advent of the railroad in 1859 completely disrupted the old order.

At first the railroad was a failure. Stock became practically worthless, and it looked as though service would be discontinued. But the stock was bought up by an enterprising resident, Charles G. Sisson. It was his dream that Tenafly should become the most beautiful town in the valley, so he bought out the road to make this possible. The control of the road passed to the New York and Erie Company and a splendid service was established. The security of the railroad spelled death to Huyler's Landing. Even the old stage-coach route to and from that point was abandoned and a new era dawned.

The designation of Tenafly as a railroad station made the district more community-conscious. It was no longer just a section of the old township of Hackensack, but a definite district with a name. The railroad brought New York business men who wished to move out of the city, and the farming region rapidly developed into a rural suburban town.

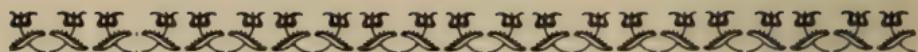
A nationally known figure who took up residence in Tenafly at this time was Elizabeth Cady





Stanton, staunch supporter of women's rights. In 1869 her husband, a leader in the anti-slavery movement, bought the charming colonial dwelling at the crest of Highwood Avenue hill, now owned by Mrs. Herbert G. Lowe. Shortly afterwards her co-worker, Susan B. Anthony, came to live with her and many of the activities which were of national import and eventually led to women's suffrage, were worked out in their study. Typical of her clever devices to gain publicity for the cause is an incident which occurred at the polling place for the district. On voting day she drove in dignity to the polls. "My husband is in New York today, and as I am a property owner and pay taxes, I have come to represent my family at the voting booth. I intend to vote the straight Republican ticket." At this point the Republican official is said to have discreetly put his hat over his eyes, but the Democratic official quite actively placed his hand over the ballot box and remarked that men, not women, could vote. Then she quietly quoted statutes and amendments concerning property rights from the Constitution and the election clerk listened in bewildered and humiliated silence. She laid her ballot on the box and stated, "With you, Sir, rests the responsibility of refusing to receive the ballot of a citizen of New Jersey."

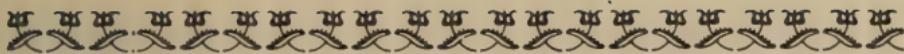
Hetty Green, famous for her great wealth, at one time established a residence in Tenafly to avoid paying New York taxes—although she never actually spent much time here. Another nationally known figure who resided in Tenafly at about this time



was Postmaster General James who served under President Garfield in 1880. He lived on Bliss Avenue in a large rambling house which is now a part of the Catholic institution, St. Anthony's Mission.

Long before churches were established in this vicinity, religious services were read in private homes or convenient meeting places. For many years Protestants and Catholics alike gathered together on Sunday to hear services. The oldest house of worship in Tenafly is the Presbyterian Church. It was founded on November 21, 1865. A wooden chapel was erected on Magnolia Avenue on property donated for that purpose by a member of the Jay family. The following year it was destroyed by fire when a lamp exploded, and funds were raised for a new church. The present sandstone church was built in 1870. Closely linked to the history of the church is Mrs. Ashbel Green. She espoused the cause of benevolent service and eventually became the National President of the Executive Committee of the Home Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church. After her death in 1885, her husband, Judge Green, built the stone manse opposite the church as a memorial to her.

West of the church on County Road was a long wooden shed for the horses. After the services it was no uncommon sight for the men to gather here and talk over matters important to the community, while the ladies, waiting on the terrace, discussed domestic problems.



In 1868, Mrs. Mahon donated land for an Episcopal church, The Church of the Atonement. This building, on Highwood Avenue, was originally frame, but later it was enlarged and stuccoed. The Chancel, organ, and stained glass window were given as memorials by various members of the Coppell family.

In the early sixties, Tenafly and Englewood were classified by the Catholic diocese in Newark as "The Swamp Missions." The only place where a Catholic service could be heard was in Fort Lee and many devout souls trudged the long distance from as far north as Norwood. The first Mass in Tenafly was celebrated in a building belonging to the Coyte family on Railroad Avenue in 1873. During that same year through the joint action of the people connected with the faith, the Mount Carmel mission was established on the Faley reservation on upper County Road. A plain square building was erected, which served as a place of worship for many years. Father Theodore MacDonald, lovingly called Father Mack, was a central figure in the growth of the parish. He not only interested himself in church matters but in school matters as well, and it was mainly through his efforts that the house (now 195 County Road) next to the church was turned into a school in 1879. The Garret Huyler property opposite the depot was purchased in 1905 for \$6,000 and the church was moved to its present location, facing Hillside Avenue. The Huyler home, now the rectory, was used for school purposes until 1908 when Paul

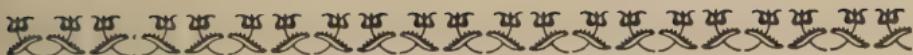


CHURCH OF THE ATONEMENT (PROT. EPIS.)



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Courtesy: Miss Elaine Taylor



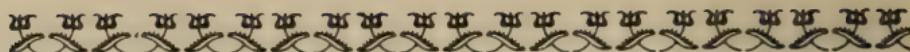
Richter's factory was purchased and rebuilt for a school. A brick convent opposite the church was built in 1919 for the Nuns who teach in the school—the property having been donated by Mrs. Emma Gertrude Colvin.

In more recent years the Methodist Church and Grace Chapel, both edifices on West Clinton Avenue, have played their part in the development of the spiritual life of Tenafly.

It was in the late sixties that a group of five men, two lawyers, one engineer, one speculator, and one capitalist, formed the Highwood Park Association. Three hundred and fifty acres of the old Jay farm were purchased for an elaborate development with the station as a focal point.

One of the first acts of the Association, after Highwood Avenue had been laid out, was the construction of Highwood Hotel, on the brow of the hill of Highwood Avenue, just east of County Road. Unfortunately, the life of this summer resort was cut short by a disastrous fire, and no attempt was made to rebuild it.

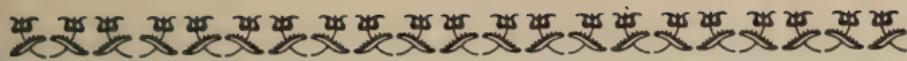
A public sale of "villa plots" to encourage residential building was greeted enthusiastically and altogether netted the Association \$110,000, but after the down payments (\$5.00 minimum), there were many who forgot their obligations and the land values fluctuated for some time.



Although the results of these two enterprises were disappointing, the remaining activities of the Association were more successful.

The movement which it sponsored for a more imposing railroad station gained rapidly, and about 1872 sufficient funds were raised for the purpose. One-third of the amount was donated by the railroad, one-third by George Huyler, and the remaining third by popular subscription. The old building was moved a few hundred feet "up the line" and is still in service as a freight house. The present attractive stone station was erected on the old site. The land east of the station was donated to the town for a permanent park by Garret Huyler and subsequently called "Huyler Park."

X Colonel A. G. Demarest, then station agent and proprietor of a new store in Cresskill, was invited by the Association to move himself and his supplies to this vicinity and establish a general store. He chose a location within a stone's throw of the station on lower Highwood Avenue and opened a large general store which could rival any modern department store for variety—coal, feed, groceries, hardware and houseware, building supplies, liquors, candy, and dress goods. In later years the various departments were separated into individual units, but the hardware and houseware merchandise is at present handled by a son and a daughter of the original owner. Part of the original building remains and comprises the back of the present "Demarest's" store.



To assist him in the store, and to handle deliveries, Colonel Demarest hired Richard Delehanty, then a gardener in Alpine. This true son of Ireland—and County Kilkenny—remained with the store from 1873 until 1910. Old residents remember his genial “Top o’ the mornin’ ” as he rode sedately in his wagon. A devout Catholic, he used to tell of walking from Alpine to Englewood, a distance of eight miles, to hear Sunday Mass. For many years he was active in both church and civic matters. He died in 1936 at the age of ninety-five.

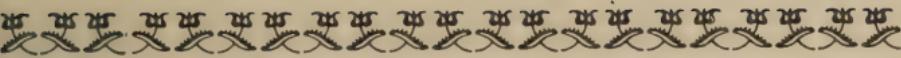
Directly in front of the store was a famous well—really a town institution. (Wells were a necessary part of domestic equipment. As a matter of fact it was not until 1889 that a water main was installed in Tenafly. John Harold, also a true son of Ireland, was an authority on sinking wells, building roads, and “landscaping.”) People throughout the community would pause for a refreshing drink, and pass the time of day with their neighbors; more than likely they would carry home a jug of this particularly fine water. There, too, were facilities for watering horses. Matters of county interest were discussed by people from up and down the line who always gathered at this convenient point for welcome refreshment and an exchange of views. This was not the only meeting place in town. Business men, returning on the train, would likely as not stroll over to Taveniere and Johnson’s Livery Stable on Washington Street and confer on the political situation or the town gossip, while their din-



MT. CARMEL ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.



METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH.



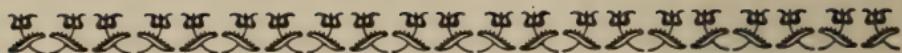
1889776

ners were getting cold at home. Many ideas important to the town's development were conceived at these informal side-walk gatherings.

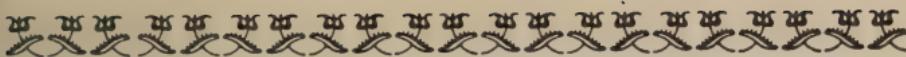
Tenafly did not develop as rapidly as was expected. Dr. Haring claims one reason was that prospective property owners would get on the train at Jersey City, but would invariably get off at Englewood because the train stopped there first. The Community Center at Englewood had gotten under way just a few years before that of Tenafly and that town seemed always "one jump ahead." The burning of the Highwood Hotel, the unsettled property values, and finally the complete disruption of the Association were additional causes for a temporary slump in the town's development.

By 1872 Palisade Township, formerly a part of the township of Hackensack, was formed. It extended from Harrington Township on the north to Englewood Township on the south, and was situated between the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers. It included the villages of Tenafly, Cresskill, Demarest, Overton, Dumont, and Bergenfield.

No story of Tenafly is complete without mention of the country doctor, J. J. Haring, who attended the births, deaths, and major ailments of a thousand families throughout these villages for nearly half a century. Born in Rockland County in 1834 of old Huguenot stock, he received a thorough academic edu-



cation, and at the age of eighteen, entered the office of the leading physician in Rockland County. After an apprenticeship he attended lectures in New York and at Jefferson Medical College. Small of stature but remarkably vigorous, he was a beloved figure as he made his daily calls on horseback. His book of recollections, *Floating Chips*, delightfully recalls incidents and activities of olden times in the valley. Tenafly was his special pride and it is fortunate indeed that he eventually chose this locality for his residence and for many years occupied the large house on the northeast corner of Magnolia and Hillside Avenues. He rarely sent out bills for services rendered. The more conscientious tell of meeting him and saying, "Well, Dr. Haring, I owe you some money—how much is it?" At which he would thoughtfully pull his beard and in a flutter of embarrassment, mention a sum. "I guess twenty-five dollars will cover it," he would say if you were prosperous, or "The fee is five dollars," if you were not. The value of services in both cases far exceeded the amount charged. Dr. Haring did not insist on cash payments. If feed for his horses was scarce he would approach a farmer who owed him money and suggest payment with a load of hay. In October, 1923, Dr. Haring returned to Tenafly from Toledo, Ohio, where he had gone to live with his daughter after his retirement, and an elaborate reception was held in his honor. Although an old man of 90, he amused his friends by telling anecdotes and even rendered a few selections on his flute. There has never been a finer or more typical representative of the country doctor than Dr. Haring.



Up to 1870, the only school available to the children was the Liberty Pole School—a tiny building on Tenafly Road just south of the present borough line. Here “readin’, ’ritin’, and ’rithmetic” were taught in earnest by the school teacher. It was the custom for the teacher to “board around” for two weeks at a time with the more liberal and substantial families. Education was a privilege and fathers were expected to pay some tuition when they could afford it. Although one teacher took charge of all classes, discipline was stern, as indicated by the tale of a naughty boy who claims, “I used to bring willow whip bundles to the teacher, who dried them and saved them for future use upon my back. Then I was compelled to sit on the ‘soft side’ of a slab until I could speak volumes.”

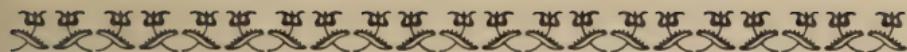
In 1871, because Liberty Pole School was overcrowded, a new school district, Number 12, was formed. Until suitable quarters could be built, sessions were held over the store of Peter Westervelt on West Clinton Avenue, Tenafly. (This building, the only frame building between the bank and the school, is still standing.) Meantime, a stately edifice—a two-story brick building with a mansard roof was constructed on the corner of Clinton Avenue and Tenafly Road—and shortly afterwards Ralph S. Maugham was made principal. The history of the school system of Tenafly is closely identified with Mr. Maugham. He accepted the post as principal-teacher and in 1886 began his long career of service to the community. He became principal and eventually superintendent of schools until his



TENAFLY BOROUGH HALL.



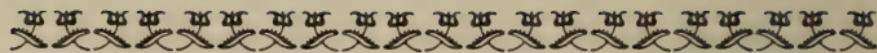
GRACE CHAPEL.



retirement in 1930. Stern but kindly, intensely serious, but gifted with a keen sense of humor, he never wavered from the standards set for his schools, best expressed in his own words as "community centers in which children are taught to appraise motives and actions and to form ideals for their own lives."

Telephone service was made available to residents in this section in 1883. Three years previously, several residents in Englewood had connections with an exchange in Jersey City, but this proved expensive and impractical. A petition brought results to Englewood residents and the first switchboard was a small affair with only fifty lines. Shortly afterwards, Tenafly too was permitted to use the Englewood Exchange and is still using it at the present time (1938).

At this time another medium of communication stimulated the expression of public opinion. In 1884, William Jellison, a resident associated with a printing business in New York, decided to print in his spare moments a monthly paper of local events. He planned a four-page, three-column paper, but so great was the demand for advertising space that he had to issue a twelve-page periodical—and it occupied such a large part of his time that the following year he moved his business to Tenafly and set out to print a weekly, *The Record*. Since the type had to be set by hand, general news, ferry and railroad schedules, and some advertising material which could be set ahead of time, appeared on the front page, while local



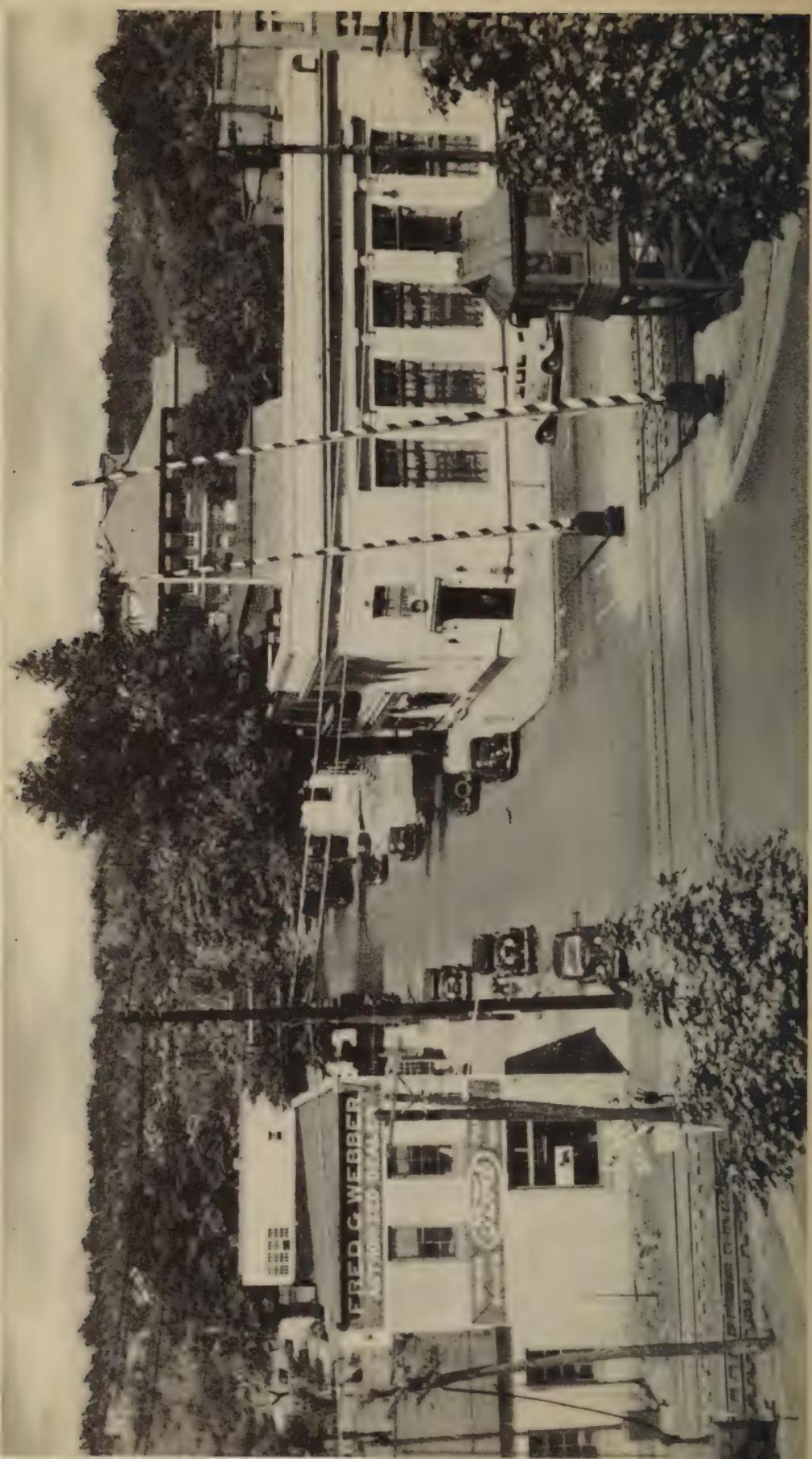
news occupied the remaining pages. Its policy "to have a clean home paper, telling the local news correctly and succinctly, and its editorials to present topics of vital importance whose trend was for the betterment of community thought and life" has been strictly followed. *The Record* has passed through many hands, titles, and states of well-being since that time. Many will remember J. Z. (Curley) Demarest, who with his editorial writing-wife, piloted *The Record* through one of its most brilliant phases. It is now known as *The Northern Valley Tribune*. Its columns have always reflected the spirit of the times with bitter debates on local questions and scorching editorials on matters of policy, some of which will be quoted later. The *North Jersey Citizen*, a new representative of the fourth estate, is now also published in Tenafly.

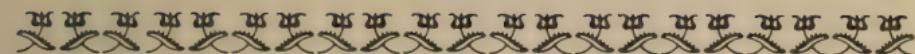
During this time many residents became actively interested in civic improvement, and in February, 1891, the Tenafly Society was formed and incorporated. This organization (which four years later adopted the name of the Tenafly Library Society), sponsored literary meetings, musicales, get-togethers, and entertainments. It boasted of a small but well-selected reference library and a circulating library of fiction. The enrollment was large and the members enthusiastic. Strangely enough this group, although primarily social at first, eventually shaped the destiny of Tenafly. Partisanship there was none, either political or religious—the unifying force was that of promoting Tenafly.



Under the guidance of Frederick L. Colver, President, funds were raised and "The Tenafly Hall Company" was incorporated with a capital stock of \$15,000. The hall was erected in 1892 for community and municipal purposes. Situated on lower Highwood Avenue diagonally opposite Demarest's store, it was fittingly described in *The Record* as follows: "The front elevation of the hall is substantial in appearance and is pleasingly ornate; the lower floor is built in brick and the upper part shingled, the whole trimmed with terra cotta and galvanized terra cotta ornaments. The doorway commands more than passing interest for its grandeur in appearance." The seating capacity of the hall was 400. The gala opening in June, 1893, was a magnificent affair. There was an elaborate musical program in which local talent was supported by the New York Philharmonic Club and the New York University Glee Club. Then the floor was cleared, and the grand march, led by Colonel and Mrs. A. G. Demarest, marked the beginning of the ball. Professor Shenkel's orchestra supplied the music and the gaily bustled beauties tripped the light fantastic with their adoring swains until long past three.

Exactly twenty years later the Borough Hall was erected on Washington Street for the Fire Department and local government purposes. Here are the offices of one of the town's foremost citizens. Nathaniel M. F. (Doc) Dennis has served the Borough for many years. He was first appointed as clerk for the Board of Education, and later became Borough Clerk





as well. He is the custodian of town records and a source for general information. If you want to know the hour of a wedding, the date of the last conflagration, or who won the baseball game, "Doc" can supply accurate facts in a remarkably short time.

On July 7, 1891, a group of citizens interested in forming a fire department met at a private home. Three hundred dollars had been promised and as much as \$300 more could be raised, it was believed, by private subscription. The money was easily collected and a hose carriage was purchased. Mr. Vossler, the local carriage maker, was empowered to build a hook and ladder truck. The north end of Mr. Atwood's building on West Clinton Avenue (now occupied by Bruce Smith) was rented (at a fee of \$4.00 a month) for equipment and a meeting place. The uniforms adopted were "red shirts, black belts, black hats with a white 'T'." George H. Westervelt was elected chief. A committee was appointed to request the use of the Presbyterian Church bell as an alarm, but the Midvale Steel Company kindly presented a bell to the town. Horses were supplied by townspeople—sometimes the horse nearest the fire house at the time of the first alarm was unhitched from a truck or carriage and became a hero for the day—but the livery stable of Taveniere and Johnson would usually fill the demand. Members, besides paying dues, were fined for failure to attend meetings or to carry out assigned duties such as keeping the meeting house in order. Commendable it was, and still is, that a group of men out of interest in the com-



munity should not only serve without pay, but pay to serve in this vitally important function. True, the company now receives financial help for equipment, but the members still serve faithfully and well without recompense. Experience has shown that the time from the first wail of the siren to the clanging of the apparatus is short indeed, and so confident in the Department are the townspeople that no proposal has ever been made for a paid group.

X At the suggestion of Frederick L. Colver, a citizens' meeting was held in 1893 at the home of Colonel A. G. Demarest for the purpose of presenting a petition that Tenafly become a borough. In pursuance to "An Act for the formation of borough governments," the petition was duly presented to the County Court in Hackensack on February 25th of the same year.

A public election was ordered for March 11th to determine the question. Strangely enough there was decided opposition to the plan and through a legal technicality an order was issued to "stay the election." It was nearly a year later—January 23, 1894—that the election was finally held.

Out of 272 ballots cast, 5 were rejected "for the reason that the envelopes each contained more than one ticket." This left 267 ballots to be counted, of which 137 were "for incorporation" and 130 "against incorporation."

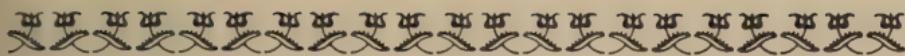


Thus, in 1894, Tenafly became an independent borough under the Law of 1879. The area of four square miles ran north and south from Cresskill to Englewood, and east and west from Bergenfield to 500 feet east of Engle Street. Two years later, the boundaries were extended by an act of legislature east to the Hudson River. This made Tenafly the only town in the valley to extend directly to the river. Henry B. Palmer was duly elected the first mayor, and Barret W. DeMott, John Hull Browning, Stephen G. Clarke, Paul Richter, James Buckley, and Frederick L. Colver were elected as councilmen. One of the first acts of this newly chosen body was to create and appoint a Board of Health, a committee comprised of both doctors and laymen. Dr. Haring, who has been mentioned previously, acted as president of the Board and Dr. J. B. W. Lansing, as secretary. Dr. Lansing was a comparative newcomer to town. Old residents of Tenafly recall Dr. Lansing driving a handsome team of black horses—his gracious wife, who usually accompanied him on his calls, sitting by his side. He was considered one of the finest surgeons in this vicinity and served actively until 1931, when he was compelled to retire because of poor health.

The Board of Health was responsible for agitating the movement to drain the swamp lands in this region. Inasmuch as property outside of the Borough was affected, special state legislation had to be enacted to make this project possible. The improvement not only solved a serious health problem but it made



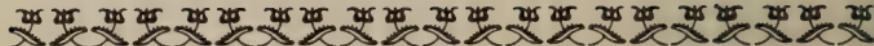
LAUNCHING OF S.S. TENAFLY.



it possible to develop lands hitherto unusable.

Another act of the council was the creation of a "police force." In 1894 George McLaughlin was hired by the Borough at a salary of \$35 a month to protect the citizens of the community. For many years he served without assistance and was on call day and night. The traffic situation became acute in 1902 and he was empowered "to arrest the operator of any power vehicle exceeding the limit of eight miles an hour or which failed to carry illumination visible for less than 100 feet." Offenders of the peace could be thrust into the local jail at the Tenafly Hall. He always met the late train and conducted unescorted ladies to their doorsteps. When "Dorey" Taveniere was added to the force, McLaughlin was made sergeant and they alternated day and night duty. Eventually in 1918, when a formal Police Department was established by ordinance of the Council, McLaughlin was given the title of Chief. He was retired in 1925 after thirty-one years of service.

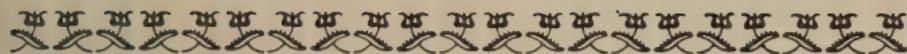
The Tenafly Library Society continued its activities in the interests of the newly formed Borough. In 1904, the men of the society formed the Borough Club, and elected Charles R. Brown as president. As recorded in the by-laws, Section 2, "This club is formed for the consideration and discussion of civic and municipal matters affecting the Borough of Tenafly, N. J. and the County of Bergen, N. J. and the development of a library in Tenafly." Locally the club was either directly or indirectly responsible for the fol-



lowing accomplishments — a trolley extension from Englewood to Tenafly; organization of the Building and Loan Association; continuance of the Public Library; various improvements around the station; the establishment of the First National Bank of Tenafly; and agitation of a movement for a Hudson River Bridge.

A group of men in the Borough Club realized the need of a local bank. Weller H. Noyes, J. Spencer Smith, and Judge William M. Seufert were among those who devoted much time to the detailed problems of organizing such an institution. These men have been on the Board of Directors of the First National Bank (now the Tenafly Trust Company) since its inception in 1907. Mr. Noyes served as president for many years, and Mr. Smith now holds that office. John Ostermann who served the Borough as one of its first councilmen and twice as mayor joined the Board during its first year, and was elected vice-president, a position he has filled continuously up to the present time.

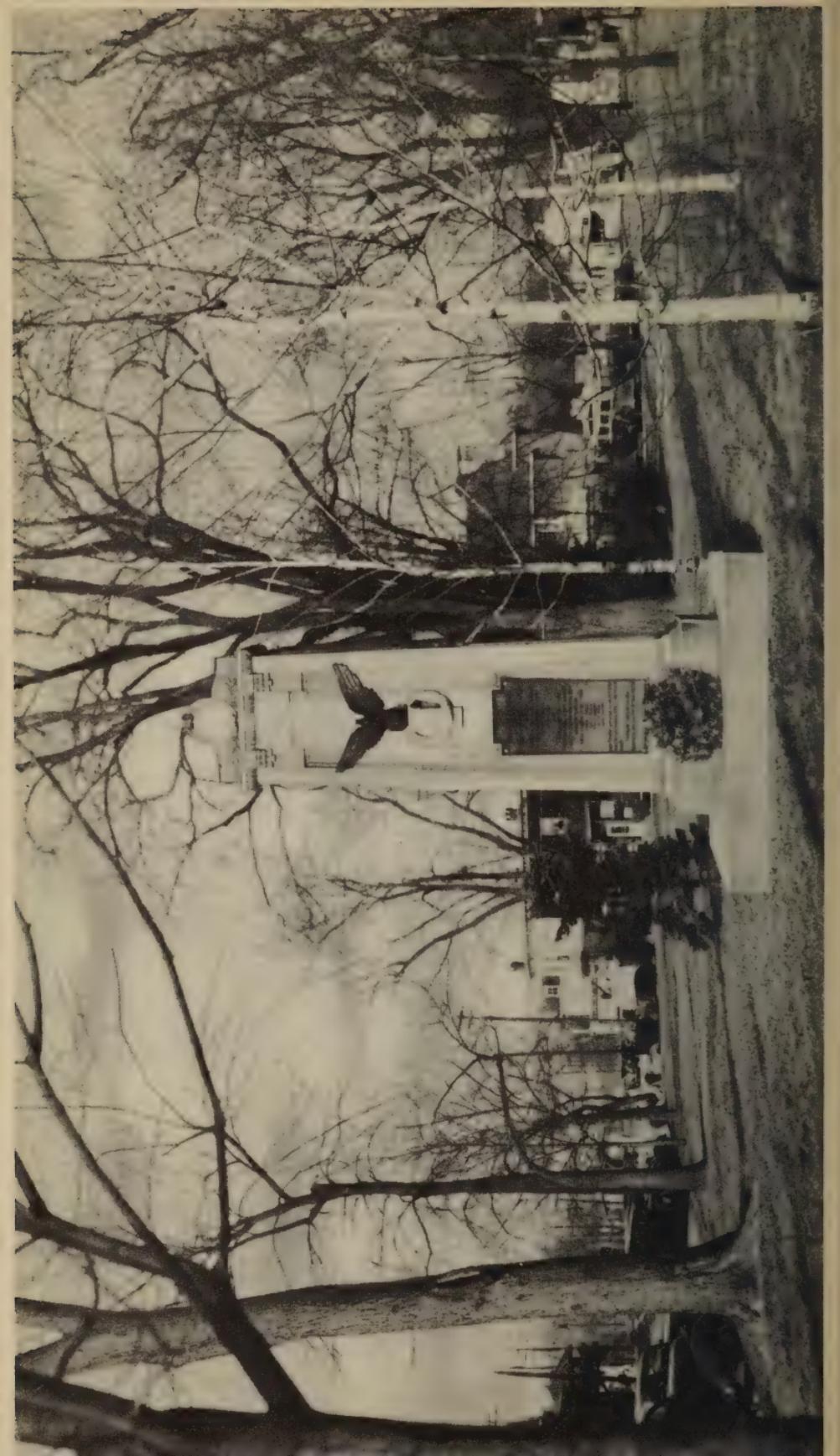
So great was the confidence of the people in this bank that business exceeded all expectations and in 1923 a new building was made possible. This bank, on the corner of West Clinton and Railroad Avenues, is one of the most dignified buildings in the Borough. From 1928 to 1937 the bank was under the leadership of Byron M. Huyler. During the recent years of financial stress, Mr. Huyler sympathetically advised rich and poor alike, and his death, on July 20,

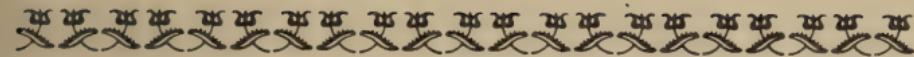


1937, was an irreparable loss to the community he had served loyally and faithfully as mayor, councilman, fireman, and banker.

Business expansion in Tenafly made citizens aware that the town could well support another banking institution. In 1926 the Northern Valley National Bank was chartered. It is located on West Railroad Avenue, nearly opposite the station.

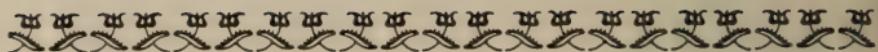
Electricity was made available to the Borough at the turn of the century. (Gas had been in use for some years previously.) In 1902, that newest type of transportation, the electric trolley, was being successfully used. Of course, since '98, Ed Cauter had owned one of those contraptions known as the "horseless carriage." It could cover the distance from his house on Highwood Avenue to the station in two minutes, but the return trip usually required the help of the occupants of the car and a few kindly neighbors. This invention was as yet not to be taken seriously as an aid in traveling. A connection to the proposed trolley line from Fort Lee Ferry to Englewood was considered essential, even before that line was in operation. The controversy which ensued over the route of the line was indeed bitter. For many months this question was the chief topic of interest in the local paper. The suggestion that the line would run along Tenafly Road met a storm of opposition. It is interesting to note here that Tenafly Road was at one time a trotting course. It was the custom for men who owned trotting horses to exer-





cise them on this long, straight track. "Brush races" were engaged in by sportsmen from all over the county —when one driver would hail another and drive the distance in friendly competition. The ladies, too, enjoyed this pastime, and enthusiastic onlookers frequently made side bets on favorites. C. Crozart Converse, (son of the composer of "What a Friend I Have in Jesus"), took up the cudgel because he claimed that as a resident of Tenafly Road he wished "to enjoy an untrolleyed peace, quietness and safety—." The outcome was a trolley which passed through few residential sections and whose terminus was at the Tenafly station. The completion of the trolley line in 1907 made uptown commuting much more simple, and the schedule made it easier to get to nearby towns. Paul McKeon, a long time resident, was a passenger on the first, and alas, the last trolley ride on the line.

The Hudson River Traction Company issued invitations for the first official ride from Englewood to Tenafly. There was an "unofficial trip" instigated by a group of mischievous boys who, the night before, took up a collection and paid a motorman to ride through to Tenafly. Their stout hearts gave way to fear and apprehension when they reached Phelps Avenue, so they implored the man to let them off and they walked the tracks to the depot. Arthur Coppell, Weller H. Noyes, and Watson G. Clark were also among those invited for the initial trip. They boarded the gaily decked trolley at Englewood and rode in state to the Tenafly depot where they were greeted by a cheering



throng. An elaborate dinner was served at Shenkel's Hotel, now the Clinton Hotel. It so happened that an artist, Andrew de Takacs, was present. He set up an easel and sketched the trolley, the station, and vicinity. The drawing was auctioned off and Mr. Coppell, the highest bidder, obtained it for \$20. Then the question arose as to who should receive the money, and by unanimous decision it was given to the Fire Department.

The trolley made its last trip in 1937. Then there were no banners and flags, merely a cardboard placard—"Last trip from Tenafly"—as it traveled its way to oblivion.

As early as 1906 there was talk of a Hudson River bridge. While the Borough Club cannot take full credit for the construction of the George Washington Bridge some twenty-five years later, the club did stage a tremendous "Bridge Rally" on December 3, 1906. Delegates from civic clubs throughout the county and an impressive group of New York and New Jersey legislators were present. The following resolution was unanimously adopted: "Resolved, that the citizens here assembled believe the bridging of the Hudson River at some point or points between New York and New Jersey to be a necessity, and that such a bridge would be beneficial not only to our state, but to the United States as an enlargement of highways over a great natural obstacle between the East and the West. We approve the action of the legislature of New Jersey appointing a commission pledging ourselves to assist

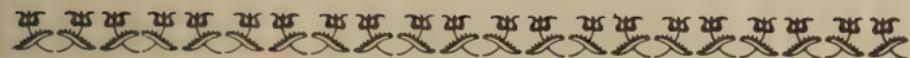


them as we may be able to a successful issue."

The Borough Club dissolved about 1915, after its purpose had been accomplished, but the Library Association continued its work independently.

"Sensible" charities have never been lacking in Tenafly, and remarkable it is that in a town of so small a population there have been three charitable institutions. First, Mrs. J. Hull Browning endowed "Rethmore Home" on Tenafly Road as a summer place for city children. At her death, she left sufficient funds for the home to be open the year round as a memorial to her husband. Mrs. John S. Lyle built "Happyland" on upper West Clinton Avenue for crippled children. Unfortunately, this noble undertaking ceased a few years ago, and the building has been torn down. On Engle Street, in the old Wardell house, is the Mary Fisher Home for needy professional people. This institution is supported by private contribution and benefit entertainments, both here and in New York. Charitable organizations are numerous and one in particular serves the poor in the Borough—the Civic Association. Few people realize the time and energy expended by these generous citizens to help the needy. One noble achievement of the Association is the Milk Fund which supplies milk without cost to undernourished school children. In 1936 the Community Chest was organized to collect a general fund and to apportion it to the various charities including the Englewood Hospital. It is indeed gratifying that for the past three



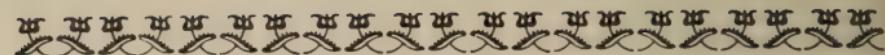


years, 1936, 1937, and 1938, the contributions donated have exceeded the amount asked.

If Tenafly's activities were limited during the earlier wars of this nation, the contrary is true during the World War. On July 27, 1917, a small item in *The Record* was headlined, "Tenafly Hopes for a Federal Army Camp"; on August 24th, "The Concentration Camp Now a Certainty"; and on September 28th, "Flag Raising Ceremony at Camp Merritt." In two short months a mere suggestion became an actuality. Here it must be stated that the entire embarkation camp was not in Tenafly, for its area also included parts of Cresskill, Dumont, and Demarest. But so important was its construction that a brief history of the camp is in order.

An Army Board, appointed by the War Department to select a site for an embarkation camp, contacted J. Spencer Smith, president of the Board of Commerce and Navigation, who was familiar with the needs of such a camp. Mr. Smith requested Watson G. Clark, borough engineer of Tenafly, to join the group who were investigating locations. After the site was agreed upon, Mr. Clark was authorized to make surveys and negotiate property leases.

At the same time General David I. Shanks was placed in charge of all embarkation activities—including Camp Merritt. The General saw to it personally that property owners whose land was involved were adequately protected.

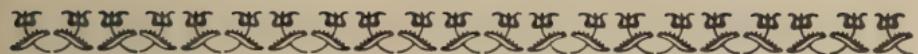


William C. Seufert, the County Judge, threatened suspension of the liquor license of anyone selling liquor to men in uniform. The municipalities near Camp Merritt cooperated with General Shanks in policing the district. Despite the fact that over a million men passed through Camp Merritt, there was practically no disorder or disturbance of any kind—and the orderliness can be attributed to the superior direction of General Shanks and his assistants.

The camp was named in honor of Major General Wesley Merritt who having distinguished himself as a cavalry officer in service during the Civil War retired from the U. S. Army in 1900, after forty years of active service.

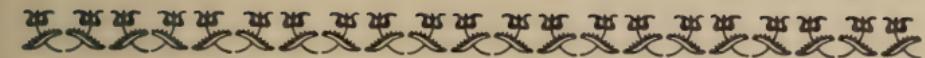
There were 1,314 buildings erected and the maximum capacity of the camp was 42,000 men. The first troops arrived on October 1, 1917, and the last on January 26, 1920. During most of this period the camp was filled to capacity and it is not difficult to realize the immense change that occurred in this region when a small city was literally dropped in our midst. During 1917-18, the fighting period, 578,566 soldiers passed through Camp Merritt and left for overseas duty—the largest number from any camp in this country—and the number passing through after overseas duty was 509,515, making a total of over a million men who passed through this camp.

The term “embarkation camp” as opposed to “training camp” was applied to Camp Merritt.



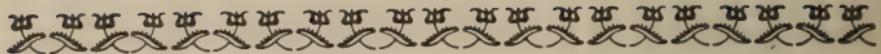
This meant that, on the whole, men received training elsewhere and passed through Merritt for a final check-up and last minute training while awaiting embarkation orders. As a protective measure, many of the soldiers left camp for overseas in the quiet hours before dawn, under cover of darkness. Some marched solemnly and secretly, without farewells, down the Closter Dock Road to Alpine Landing—the same place where Cornwallis had landed his troops early in the Revolution. The Erie and West Shore Railroads also carried many soldiers to the Army Docks at Hoboken. In addition to the usual knitting, rolling bandages, etc., with which women of this country occupied themselves during those years, the women of these communities had a human task to perform—that of making the last days before leaving their native shores pleasant and comfortable for our boys. Volunteers worked in the library, the Red Cross House, and the Hostess House. Theatres, athletic fields, places of worship, and club rooms had to be organized. Sweethearts and parents would arrive in droves for a last few precious hours and the women at the Hostess House would try to locate the boys. Sometimes there would be joyful reunions but often the tragic news had to be broken that they had left for the front a few hours previously. Often weddings were arranged, complete with veil and flowers. Homes were thrown open to entertain the boys—a committee formed for this purpose would send two here and three there, for dinner. Companies of soldiers would march through the town and at the command of “Halt! Rest!” would more than likely sit down on one’s front lawn. When





troop trains passed through, children counted the cars, waved violently, and mailed countless letters that were tossed from the windows. Siren time was 8:15 P.M. and no minors were permitted to be about unattended. Emergency measures were taken to prohibit the sale of liquor. All in all, times were hectic, exciting, and tragic. It wasn't until January, 1920, that the camp was abandoned and life once more became routine. Some of the buildings were razed, many were accidentally burned in a series of gigantic fires, and a few warehouses still stand. On Knickerbocker Road and Madison Avenue at the center of the camp site, stands an imposing obelisk—a monument dedicated on May 30, 1924, "In memory of these soldiers who gave their lives while on duty in Camp Merritt." Several thousand attended the exercises, and among those addressing the assemblage were General Pershing and Governor Silzer of New Jersey.

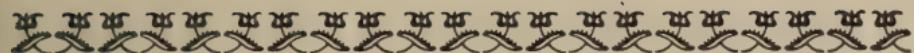
Another wartime activity can best be explained by quoting a notice which appeared in *The Record* on September 7, 1917. "Tenafly Home Guard appeals for volunteers. The Tenafly Home Guard needs able-bodied men for a patriotic duty. The necessity for home protection is urgent and we have undertaken to provide that protection. We require 75 men between 18-55 years. Apply to Captain E. H. Huxley or First Sergeant E. B. Mallory." This was enough. The response was immediate and our "home guard" acquired guns and uniforms, were trained and drilled, and on call day or night for any local emergency.



In the Liberty Loan Drives, so great were Tenafly's contributions in proportion to the town's size, that the Federal Government named a 7,000-ton steel cargo ship "Tenafly" in acknowledgment of this accomplishment. The ship was launched at Shooters Island on November 16, 1919, before a goodly crowd of local citizens. Nancy Mary Sisson christened the ship.

On October 12, 1923, the Tenafly War Monument, erected by the town and located at the south end of Huyler Park, was unveiled and formally presented to the town by Councilman J. Elmer Westervelt. Ex-service men marched from Borough Hall to Huyler Park and business places along the line of march were appropriately decorated. The inscription on the monument tells of the noble service performed by 180 soldiers and nurses from this community: "This memorial is erected in appreciation of the patriotism, valor and fidelity of all those of the Borough of Tenafly, New Jersey, who served their country in the World War, 1917-1918. And to the memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice and laid down their lives that liberty and justice should prevail."

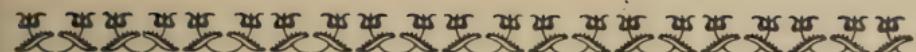
Two years after the conclusion of the war conditions had almost assumed a normal aspect but in April, 1920, commuters were confronted with a serious problem. Firemen and brakemen of the Erie Railroad system went out on an unauthorized strike, thereby intending to cripple service. The service was



not entirely crippled but some of our local "Casey Jones" suffered from stiffness and strain. The Railroad Company claimed that the service would not be disrupted if the commuters would lend their assistance in manning the trains. Bankers, lawyers, and brokers became efficient stokers and brakemen. Tenafly was the shifting point. Tired men from up the line were replaced by fresh recruits. A Tenafly youth reportedly fired the train on a record run which covered the distance from Sparkill to Jersey City in thirty-one minutes —remarkable indeed because an extra stop was made in Leonia to pick up a straggler. The number of volunteers far exceeded the positions available, and it was no uncommon sight for a soot-besmeared face, partially covered by a grimy cap, to enter the sedate office of a downtown bank. The strike was settled amicably after two weeks' duration, and commuting once more became a routine affair.

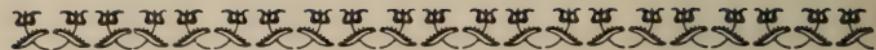
One of the most accurate indications of the expansion of a town is the growth of its schools. The first public school has already been mentioned. In 1888, Miss Amelia Haring, daughter of the well-known doctor, organized a private school in her father's home, where, in conjunction with intellectual work, "efforts were made to cultivate the moral and religious natures of children and to instill into their youthful minds high ideas of correct deportment." By 1900, Principal Maugham had a staff of five teachers in his grammar school — the high-school pupils being sent to Englewood. At that time the school was overcrowded and





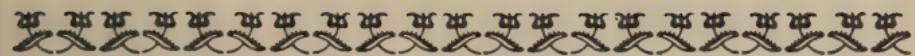
when the town decided to have a kindergarten, the class had to be held in one of the buildings of the Rethmore Home. In the meantime, several private schools had been established, as well as the Parochial School previously mentioned. In 1907 a fine new grammar school was erected and later appropriately named "The Browning School." At the time of its construction, this was considered a model school not only in New Jersey, but in nearby states. Its architecture was unequalled. John Hull Browning, who served actively on the Board, donated funds to make this possible, and drawing, sewing, cooking, and printing equipment were installed in the Tenafly Public School long before progressive educationalists deemed it necessary. This gave to Tenafly the high scholastic reputation in architecture, scholarship, and mechanical arts which has been conscientiously maintained since that time.

The Borough owned half a block of property, and it was expected that this would be sufficient to house public-school buildings for several generations. A real estate boom, however, followed the post-war depression, with the result that in 1921 the schools were again filled to capacity. The town voted an appropriation of \$315,000 to build a new grammar school. At this time, Englewood High School was also overcrowded, and it was announced that pupils from "up the line" would have to attend school elsewhere. With the new building under way, the natural step was for Tenafly to have its own high school, and neighboring towns without high schools were in-



vited to send pupils here, and to pay tuition. The townspeople responded loyally with an added appropriation to make this plan possible. The old building on the corner was torn down and the new school, adjoining the grammar school, was erected. That the actual building costs were reduced to a minimum was due largely to the untiring efforts of Walter Stillman, chairman of the Building Committee. Never a day passed during the construction of the building that Mr. Stillman could not be seen inspecting its progress. It is an actual fact that even the sample bricks were used. There was no contract for the job—local workmen were employed by the Board, and so efficiently was the work carried out that waste of time and materials was reduced to a minimum. By using this procedure a very substantial sum was saved the taxpayers.

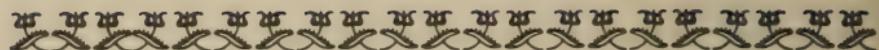
On June 10, 1921, the cornerstone for the new building was laid by Gladys Huyler, a descendant of the original Huyler family and daughter of the late Byron M. Huyler. In February, 1922, after having enjoyed a brief vacation when schools were closed because of a scarlet fever epidemic, a small class of thirty settled down in the basement of the partially finished building, to become the first Freshman class of the Tenafly High School. Various curricula were offered and most courses were taught by one teacher. The cement mixer pounded and the workmen sang "My Sunny Tennessee" through the ventilators. Many a strange holiday was called—sometimes the mixer was too strenuous, sometimes on warm days the furnaces



were turned on full force—but in the meantime one of the finest school buildings in the state was being completed over the heads of the students. The school was dedicated on November 17, 1922, and the first class was graduated in June, 1925.

Three years later there was again talk of an additional school for the children who lived east of County Road. The town accepted the Board's recommendation, property on Magnolia Avenue was purchased, and the attractive building known as the Maugham School was erected. It is gratifying indeed that Mr. Maugham, who first had but two assistants, later actively served the Borough as superintendent with three schools, sixty-five teachers, and 1,500 children under his supervision; and that he not only lived to see a school named for him, but was still in office during its initial year. In the last few years, Tenafly has had an unprecedented growth in population with the result that at present (1938) the schools are once more filled to capacity. In order to secure a scientific approach to the problem, the Board of Education authorized Dr. N. L. Englehardt of Teachers College, Columbia University, to make a comprehensive survey of the school situation. This enlightening report, completed in May, 1938, not only analyzed the present problem, but estimated future school needs as well, and can be used by the Board as a guide for years to come.

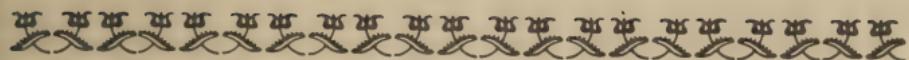
That Tenafly has such a fine school system is in a large part due to the untiring work of the



Board of Education. The town has always supported the recommendations of the Board, and well it should, for the Board is now and always has been composed of business and professional men and women who devote hours of their spare time to the problems of public education. The members are elected to office by the public in special school elections and it is a completely non-partisan group.

Since 1920, the library has been a Free Public Library, and has worked in conjunction with the schools. All residents of the Borough and all school children have free access to and use of its books.

The United States Post Office in Tenafly has had nearly as many homes as it has had postmasters. The first one was in the depot in 1885, and Joseph Craig was appointed postmaster. When William Jellison was given the office he had a small booth in what was then Knox's Grocery Store. Then another building, located where Bower's Drug Store is now, was used until it was bought for a library and moved down toward Tenafly Road. In 1905, part of the first floor of the Bower Building (now the Oddo Building) was rented for the purpose until 1928 when the post office was moved to its present location on County Road. Originally appointed by President Wilson, William J. Bodecker served as postmaster from 1914-1933, an exceptionally long term for an appointment which usually changes with each Administration. It was through his foresight that the mails were delivered as

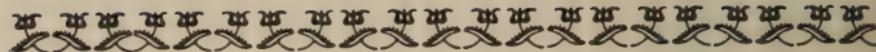


usual in the valley during the two weeks of the Erie Railroad strike. He had heard threats of a walkout and consequently arranged to hire a truck to collect the mail from Jersey City at stated intervals. It was also through his efforts that home mail delivery service was established in Tenafly in 1920.

Tenafly is distinctly a residential district, although there have been a few small factories. A most interesting industry at present is that of the J. & R. Lamb Studios, where stained glass, mosaic work, and carved woodwork and furniture are made. The work is done in a small building on Clinton Avenue, opposite the high school, and it is fascinating to visit this factory and see stained glass windows in process of construction.

The cultural side of Tenafly has not been neglected. For a week each year, the Woman's Club sponsors a distinctly unusual show. Artists are invited to exhibit pictures in the store windows. Landscapes, still lifes, and portraits replace the usual array of canned goods, cosmetics, and vegetables. The store-keepers cooperate in making this unique feature possible. Among the many local artists represented are Harvey Dunn and the Ray Wilcox family.

For music-lovers, there are two organizations. Clifford Demarest, well-known musician and former musical director in the public schools, organized the Beethoven Society several years ago. This



orchestral group, composed of 45 members, rehearses each week and holds two concerts annually. The Neighborhood Glee Club originated as a branch of the Old Tenafly Library Association. It has continued ever since and its membership is open to male singers in the valley who can pass a vocal test. The club meets each week during the season and is under the supervision of a professional director. Two public concerts are held annually.

The Knickerbocker Country Club on Knickerbocker Road has an excellent golf course and an attractive club house. The Tenafly Tennis Club on Highwood Avenue caters to those who enjoy that sport. In 1924 Malcolm S. MacKay and his sister, Jenny L. MacKay, donated land at Jefferson Avenue and River-edge Road for a public athletic field. This athletic field, known as Roosevelt Common, was dedicated to the memory and ideals of Theodore Roosevelt, great lover of outdoors, and is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education. Outdoor public assemblies and athletic contests are held there, and eventually a stadium will be built for spectators.

The business district of Tenafly covers a large area, encompassing parts of West Clinton, Railroad, and Highwood Avenues, Washington Street, and County Road. In addition to the railroad service, commuters to New York can also use buses across the George Washington Bridge and thence the subways. There have been numerous real estate developments in



recent years. Many of the more pretentious estates along Engle Street and elsewhere have been sold and the property has been divided into building lots. It is interesting to note the increase in population and land values here in the last forty years.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Assessed Value</i>
1890	4 sq. mi.	1,046	\$ 800,000†
1920	6 sq. mi.	3,585	6,500,000†
1938	6 sq. mi.	*8,000	14,500,000†

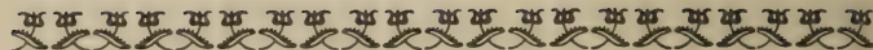
(†—Approximate for each year)

(*—Estimated)

That Tenafly is a prosperous, healthy, and progressive community can readily be seen from the following statistics.*

Number of miles of paved streets.....	30
" " telephones installed	1,800
" " privately owned homes.....	1,730
" " members of Police Force.....	15
" " " Fire Department	32
" " school children	2,000
" " doctors (practicing locally)	8
" " bank depositors	7,800
Births (1937)	85
Deaths (1937)	58

(*—Based on official Borough of Tenafly records—1937)



Party politics have never been a controlling factor in our local government. True, the mayor and council are elected from political parties, but a change in the membership of the governing body has not necessarily indicated a change of governmental policy. It can be claimed that this policy has always been for the public interest, no matter what the political affiliations of the membership. Members of the various committees, such as the Library Committee, the Town Planning Committee, and others, are appointed without regard to their political beliefs. The Tenafly Library Society and the Borough Club were strictly non-partisan groups desirous only of promoting civic improvements.

Issues which affect the townspeople have always been and still are discussed at open meetings, and special appropriations are submitted to the people for acceptance or rejection by electoral referendum. One splendid example of Tenafly's ability to meet, discuss, and settle matters of vital town importance was the sewerage question. Every aspect of the problem was thoroughly weighed and in 1923 the Sewer Plan was adopted at a special election.

Fortunately Tenafly has not yet become too populous for the democratic institution of "town meetings," but the natural preliminary to these meetings has disappeared. It has been previously mentioned that the old well, the livery stable, and the church shed were points of contact where townspeople



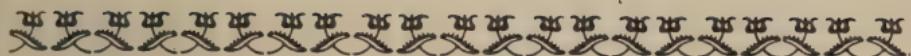
discussed borough affairs and where important ideas were conceived. The railroad, too, served as a forum for the pros and cons of community topics. Little did Ed Cauter realize when he chugged down the hill that he was ushering in a new era which would eventually destroy the impromptu meeting places. In recent years many people have found it more convenient to commute by bus or car. Since there is no central station for bus commuters and there are many lines of transit, how is the man on Knickerbocker Road to sound out the opinion of a man on Engle Street? What is the solution? Perhaps a community house, not unlike the original town hall in purpose, where brotherhoods or individuals could assemble for various purposes, and where they would have a natural opportunity to exchange views.

A community does not just happen to develop. It was not mere chance that caused a group of citizens to form the Tenafly Library Society or the Borough Club, who sponsored so many progressive moves in Tenafly. It was community pride, and it is community pride again that has recently inspired the formation of the Business Associates of Tenafly, Inc.

The object and purpose of this organization are:

To do all and everything which may tend to promote the welfare of the community and the business of the members of the Association.





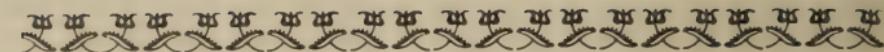
To promote the adoption and application of higher social, business and professional standards.

To cooperate in creating and maintaining that sound public opinion and high idealism which make possible the building of a better business community.

To discuss, formulate and make plans tending to better the working conditions and business enterprises of its members.

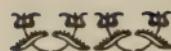
The ultimate success of the program outlined above is dependent on the cooperation of the townspeople. It is believed that the members of this Borough will support those measures as wholeheartedly now as they have supported similar measures in the past.

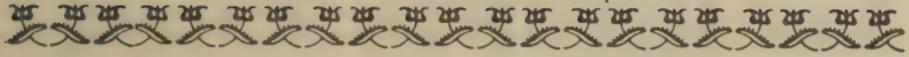
It is hoped that the records of the work accomplished cited here will serve as an inspiration to the citizens of Tenafly and that the spirit which carried a tiny rural settlement forward to an outstanding community will remain a vital force in the progressive development of "Willow Meadows."



Author's Note: This history is not dedicated to any particular individual but rather to that group of worthy people who have had such a large part in shaping the destiny of this Borough, some of whom are mentioned herein and many others whose names are not specifically mentioned but who nevertheless played an important part in borough affairs.

It would be difficult to list a bibliography for this history. The material was obtained from old books, newspapers, atlases, Borough records, scrap books, and family albums; part of the information was gathered from the recollections of old-time residents of Tenafly. I wish to express my grateful appreciation to all whose cooperation aided so materially in the compilation of this history.




Englewood, New Jersey
February 16, 1939

MISS EVA B. SISSON
Tenafly, New Jersey

Dear Miss Sisson:

When I learned that you had recently completed the Story of Tenafly, it occurred to me that possibly my views regarding the historical importance of military activities in and around Tenafly during the Revolution might be of interest to you.

I regard the events described in the enclosed as the important crisis of the war.

I look forward with much interest to reading your story.

Yours very cordially,

WILLIAM M. SEUFERT

Tenafly, New Jersey

February 18, 1939

JUDGE WILLIAM M. SEUFERT
Citizens National Bank Building
Englewood, New Jersey

Dear Judge Seufert:

Thank you so much for your noteworthy article.

I feel sure that your interpretation of certain military tactics during the Revolution will be

*of as great interest to many other people in this vicinity
as it was to me.*

*I am therefore requesting your permission
to publish your study as a supplement to what I
have already written.*

*Would you mind letting me know about
this as soon as possible because the Story of Tenafly
is now in the printer's hands.*

*Hoping for a favorable reply, I am,
Sincerely yours,*

EVA B. SISSON
Englewood, New Jersey
February 20, 1939

MISS EVA B. SISSON
Tenafly, New Jersey

Dear Miss Sisson:

*I will leave the disposition of my study
entirely to you. I appreciate the compliment you pay
to my views.*

*With best wishes, I am,
Cordially,*

WILLIAM M. SEUFERT

Tenafly did not begin to assume the character of a village until 1840. Prior to that period the Northern Valley, wonderful and attractive in every way from an agricultural standpoint, consisted of a continuous row of farms running from what is now the Hudson County line on the south to where the highlands begin in the vicinity of Grandview and Piermont. The lower end of this valley, from what is now Demarest to Fairview, consisted of parallel farms in their original state, with easterly boundaries on the Hudson River, the westerly line, the Hackensack River, the Overpeck Creek and the Tenakill Creek. The width of

the farms depended upon the period of time and the date considered. Originally, grants from the Crown of England have varied from a mile to three or four miles in width. The farms descended through the families by divisions extending from east to west, maintaining the same boundaries on the easterly and westerly sides, until a period of about 1850, when they began to be otherwise cut up. As a matter of fact, there are some divisions today on the Tenafly mountain that have come down in this way and show a width of sixty-six feet and a length of nearly a mile or more. Between Bergen, now a part of Jersey City in the vicinity of Journal Square, and Closter there were no villages in the Northern Valley. Part of the valley, from Englewood South was called English Neighborhood and that from Englewood North, Closter. The Palisades to the east, north of Englewood, was known as the Closter Mountain, with the southern part changed to Tenafly Mountain, after Tenafly's existence as a village came into being.

I have been particularly interested in the Revolutionary history of the Closter district, because in it occurred an error of military judgment on the part of the British arms which, to my mind, is the most important episode of the Revolutionary war and, undoubtedly, saved the existence of this Republic.

Probably the darkest period of the war existed between September, 1776 and January, 1777. That was the time of Washington's retreat across the Jerseys before the army of Cornwallis. Turning from what appeared to be absolute defeat and demoralization he, by his brilliancy and genius as a military leader, changed the apparent tragedy into the glorious victories of Trenton and Princeton, demonstrating his

ability, even with meagre resources, to stand off the strength of the English Crown. If Washington and his army had been captured at any point during this retreat it would, undoubtedly, have ended the war. The American army was never at any lower ebb than at that time.

After the loss of New York City, the battle of White Plains and the capture of Fort Washington by the British, the outlook, indeed, was dark and gloomy. When Washington began his retreat across the Jerseys, with the crossing of the Hudson River at Kings Ferry, he had but the remnant of an army. Lee, at Newcastle, refused to coordinate with him and kept a substantial force from him. General Greene had about three thousand men at Fort Lee, which additional force would give Washington some protection and strength if they could be united. General Howe, commanding the British army, undoubtedly, knew of this situation, because the plans of Howe and Cornwallis indicate an invasion of New Jersey for the purpose of capturing Washington and by that stroke ending the Revolution. Cornwallis was in command of the expedition and with a substantial army landed at Closter dock and started what was to be the conquest of the State of New Jersey and the elimination of the rebel army.

I never could understand why Cornwallis did not immediately capture New Bridge, which would result in bottling up Greene at Fort Lee in a manner that would be impossible for him to escape. It is apparent that New Bridge was both nearer and more accessible to Cornwallis than Fort Lee and after its capture the surrender of Greene could not be avoided. I believe I have found the solution in my examination of some old maps which indicate a state of facts that

do not appear to be of historical record.

There are in existence what are supposed to be complete maps, both from an American standpoint and a British standpoint, of the metropolitan district at the time of the Cornwallis invasion of the Jerseys. One is the American map, made by General Erskine for General Washington, which covers the entire territory on the west side of the Hudson River from Fort Clinton to Hoboken and as far west as Warwick, including almost all of Bergen and Passaic counties and extending southwest to Newark and Elizabethtown. The British map covers the operations of the British army under Howe in New York and East Jersey. We are interested in both these maps, largely in the location of the towns and villages and roads, for accuracy as to the conclusions we are about to draw.

When we speak of roads we must bear in mind that the roads of Revolutionary days are not comparable in any manner with those that exist today. What would be regarded today as an inferior, one-way, dirt road, unimproved and following the contour of the land, without grade, would be in Revolutionary times considered a substantial main line road. Roads were laid out in the first instance almost entirely by the landowner and for his convenience in accomplishing the purpose of his existence, roads to his fields, to his woodlands or, in some instances, to the river, or to connect up with adjacent farms. There were very few of what could be regarded as public roads. In the Northern Valley there was just one road, running north and south. The south end was at Hoboken (what was known then as Hoebuck Ferry) and the road wound up across the hill to the lowlands adjacent to the Hackensack River, then north, following the east side of the

river to the junction of the Overpeck Creek, then on the east side of that creek up the valley to what is now Englewood, then turning slightly to the west through the meadows at that place to a fork where the Soldiers Monument now stands. The north branch of the fork ran as far as Tenafly and across the Tenakill at this point, then following a northeasterly course to about Demarest, then turning abruptly west and winding its way across the Village of Closter and over to Tappan. Just below the district of what is now Ridgefield a road went west across the swamp to a ferry located about a quarter of a mile south of the junction of the Overpeck Creek and the Hackensack River. This was a flat-boat ferry, to transport horses and passengers across the river and continue on up to Hackensack. The road across the meadows was a corduroy road and was abandoned when the Hackensack Turnpike was built. The southern fork of the road, at the Liberty Pole (now the Soldiers Monument) followed a winding course to Teaneck, where it joined the Schraalenburg Road. The southern part of the main road was called the "road leading from Hoboken to the Liberty Pole" and also, the "English Neighborhood Road." The road to Teaneck, from the Liberty Pole, was called the "road leading from Teaneck to the Liberty Pole." The north branch was called the "Tenafly Road" until it got beyond the present Borough of Tenafly, where its name changed to the "County Road." Accommodating Closter was a road through the woods and down the cliffs to the west shore of the Hudson River where a dock was located from which wood, stone and produce were occasionally shipped to New York. This road was infrequently used and, undoubtedly, was of the roughest type. There was no road along the Palisades region

from north to south, because no occasion for such a thoroughfare existed and the boulevard is of substantially recent origin.

On the American map the English Neighborhood Road is plainly marked and its course more or less accurately fixed. This is true of all of the north and south roads in the County. The east and west roads are only vaguely indicated and inaccurately located. Both maps are full of inaccuracies and the British map particularly so and shows the foundation for the errors that the British Generals made.

The American Congress, undoubtedly, formulating plans from a map of the region, directed the construction of two forts on opposite sides of the Hudson River for the purpose of preventing British ships going up the Hudson River and, under this command, Fort Washington was erected on the New York side and Fort Constitution on the west side, subsequently called Fort Lee, in the vicinity of Flat Rock. This locality at that time had no name but ever since the encampment was put there and named "Fort Lee" the place was called by that name. The construction of both these forts ended in disaster to the American arms. Fort Washington was captured with a tremendous loss at a vital time and Fort Lee had to be abandoned and was never used thereafter.

The idea of stopping traffic in the Hudson River turned out to be ridiculous, because there were no available guns to hamper in the slightest degree the passage of the British warships up and down the river. It is well known that the guns from Fort Lee never even reached the shore of the west side of the river and at one time were dragged down to the edge of the water, but, even at that place, could accomplish

nothing. While Fort Washington was constructed as a strong fortification and a modern fort at that time, Fort Lee never, however, developed any further than a fortified encampment, protected by a stone wall surrounding it. The fort was located in the vicinity of the present public park in Fort Lee, where the Soldiers Monument stands and the north wall of the encampment was located about one hundred yards south of the present Main Street in Fort Lee.

General Greene was placed in command of Fort Lee with about three thousand troops. He immediately threw out two outposts, on the west shore of the Hudson River—one about eight miles to the north at Sneden's Landing, where some character of fortifications were erected in the shape of redoubts, and one south at Bull's Ferry on the top of the Palisades. Both were observation points for the purpose of watching the British movements on the Hudson River.

The British map was, undoubtedly, made up from maps in the possession of the British army in 1776 and shows inaccurate information as to the roads and villages in New Jersey across the Hudson River. It locates Schraalenburg, made up of the present boroughs of Bergenfield and Dumont, as north of Closter, and Hackensack far south of its present location, as a matter of fact, further south than the Aquakinunk, which is now Passaic City. New Bridge is placed south of Hackensack, while it is probably three miles north of the Court House. Fort Lee, as is well known, is immediately east of Hackensack, on the British map and is shown to be between the Closter Dock landing and Hackensack.

Originally, the only method of crossing the Hackensack River in Bergen County was at the

ferry at Little Ferry and at the bridge now located in the Borough of River Edge. Just before the Revolutionary war a new bridge south of the one at River Edge was built and a road constructed leading distinctly east to the Schraalenburg Road, which I understood took the name of the Minehill Road. Thus developed the terms "New Bridge" and "Old Bridge", which existed for a considerable length of time, Old Bridge being subsequently changed to River Edge, while New Bridge retained its identity. Of course, from the erroneous maps and information, Fort Lee was believed to lie between the landing and Hackensack and would, therefore, obstruct the British troops. It was evident to the British that Fort Lee should be captured first and plans were, undoubtedly, laid out to that end. Notwithstanding current anecdotes, Greene had ample time to act and receive information about the progress of the British army. The invading army was large in size, was headed by Lord Cornwallis and consisted of the First and Second Battalions of Light Infantry, two companies of Chasseurs, two battalions of British and two battalions of Hessian grenadiers, two battalions of guards and the Forty-second and Forty-third Regiments of the line. It required the collection of a large number of flat boats and other means of transportation to take this army across the Hudson River, with all of its equipment, and, from the observation point at Sneden's Landing all of the operations of the enemy on the east side of the river were observable. It was undoubtedly reported to General Greene from time to time, because he had known that he could not hold Fort Lee and, as a matter of fact, there was no reason for holding it, because it protected no territory of particular importance and hence a large amount of equipment had been

early sent across to Hackensack. The British selected Closter Dock Landing instead of Sneden's Landing, because the latter was somewhat fortified and they did not desire to risk a fight at the landing place. When the British army started to cross on the morning of November 18, 1776 an officer from the Post at Sneden's Landing rode to Fort Lee and notified Greene. He immediately ordered the retreat of his force to Hackensack, splitting it up so that one part went south to Little Ferry and across the river there, the other north to New Bridge to take possession of the bridge and protect the American army in Hackensack. At the same time he sent word to General Washington, at Hackensack, and he met him at New Bridge when he arrived. There was no apparent confusion at Fort Lee. The retreat was orderly. The lack of transportation facilities caused a considerable amount of camp equipment to be left behind, which, however, was rendered useless before being abandoned.

What has always puzzled me was the fact that notwithstanding the erroneous information that Cornwallis had he did not meet Greene's forces coming from Fort Lee and collide in battle in the vicinity of Englewood. The only avenue open to get to Fort Lee was west on the Closter Dock Road crossing at Closter and south on the County—Tenafly and English Neighborhood Roads—to Leonia and then East to Fort Lee. Following this course it was apparent that he had to meet Greene. I could not see how it was possible for Cornwallis to take his army, with all of its equipment and artillery as well as cavalry, down through the stretch of woods from Alpine to Fort Lee, which he must have done in failing to cross Greene's line of retreat. From what we know of the situation, Greene had

time not only to take his army to Newbridge and get it across but he, himself, went back toward Fort Lee to collect stragglers so that as much of his entire force as possible could be saved and during the whole procedure there were no engagements of any kind, particularly in the vicinity of New Bridge. Cornwallis had, undoubtedly, gone along the top of the Palisades to Fort Lee but how could he reach there was a problem as far as the known facts were concerned. An examination of some old maps coming recently to my attention appeared to solve the problem. When the Outpost at Sneden's Landing was established a military road was laid out and cut through from that point to Fort Lee. It followed substantially the direction of the present boulevard. This road was, undoubtedly, frequently used by the soldiers back and forth from Fort Lee to the landing, as well as for the cartage of supplies and its appearance at that time had more character as a road than the road from the dock to Closter and it is my opinion that the British army, when it reached the crossing of the military road at its intersection with the Closter Dock Road, turned left to follow the military road down to Fort Lee. On the British map there is no indication of any other road between the Hudson River and the County Road and the officers must have taken the military road for the road as laid out on their maps. Following this road south to Fort Lee they reached that point in the afternoon of November 18, 1776, found the fort evacuated, took possession of it and on the night of November 18th the entire British army encamped south of the fort. On the next day, Fort Lee was evacuated and the British army reached the Hackensack River where it encamped on the night of November 19, along the east bank of the river,

stretching up from the lower part of Bogota nearly to New Bridge. At the same time the American army was across the river occupying Hackensack. Washington went to the dock on the Hackensack River, at a point where the Court Street bridge now crosses, and observed the British encampment on the east side of the river a short time before the American army abandoned Hackensack and he then crossed to the Passaic River at the Aquakinunk bridge and stopped at Newark.

The development of these facts apparently answers the question as to why Cornwallis did not meet and stop Greene before Greene got to New Bridge. His error made at the crossroads, the old military road and the Closter Dock Road in Alpine, is, as before indicated, a most important episode and the turning point of the Revolutionary war. If, instead of turning left and south at the crossroads and following the military road to Fort Lee, the British army had gone on to New Bridge and stopped Greene from getting across, the war would have been ended, as every historian recognizes, but, the addition of the Greene troops to Washington's army permitted him to continue on with a masterly retreat which ultimately turned into victory.

The old Military road crossed the eastern section of the Borough of Tenafly and the Borough lies midway between the Closter Dock landing and New Bridge, and, therefore, is entitled to consider itself as a part of a locality where events of tremendous importance occurred in the establishment of this Republic, largely of a negative character, because of errors committed by the British army, but, nevertheless, tremendously important as to ultimate results.



2188 1

